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PRIMITIVE NEGRO ART

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

1923

Delight Rushmore

PRIMITIVE NEGRO ART

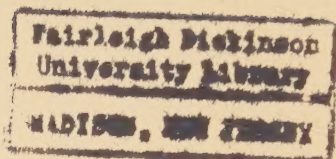
CHIEFLY FROM THE
BELGIAN CONGO

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOTES
BY STEWART CULIN

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Department of Ethnology

1923



N
7395
.N4
P74
1923

Handwritten text in the top right corner, consisting of five lines: "N", "7395", ".N4", "P74", and "1923". The handwriting is in a simple, slightly slanted style.

The collection here displayed, the property of the Brooklyn Museum and procured by the writer in Europe in the years 1921 and 1922, represents more or less completely the arts and industries of the Negro tribes of Central Africa. Derived in greater part from the Belgian Congo, it consists chiefly of the work of the Bushongo, a great tribe, with many subdivisions, living in West Central Africa between the Sankuru and Kasai rivers and between four degrees and five degrees south of the Equator. The Bushongo have a high artistic sense and are the most advanced in the arts, especially those of wood carving and weaving, of all the African natives.

The objects comprise sculpture in wood and ivory, textiles, basketry and metal work, masks and fetishes used in religious ceremonial, musical instruments, game boards, tobacco pipes, weapons, furniture and utensils, with clothing and objects of personal adornment.

The entire collection, whatever may have been its original uses, is shown under the classification of art; as representing a creative impulse, and not for the purpose of illustrating the customs of the African peoples. As art it may be considered as inspired by fresh and direct observation of nature. It is this which gives it much of its peculiar interest and value and it is this which may explain the influence Negro art is having upon our own art as intimated in the work of many recent painters and sculptors.

Of all the exotic arts, indeed, from which our world is seeking stimulation, the writer regards it as the most vital, far outclassing that of Polynesia with which it has affinities. The first notable appreciation of the aesthetic value of Negro sculpture, the form in which this art finds its most obvious expression,

occurred some seventeen years ago in Paris among a small society of amateurs: collectors, sculptors and painters. From Paris the interest extended to Germany, and subsequently, through the efforts of one or two individuals, to America. The expression of this appreciation has been confined to artists. Apart from private exhibitions, designated as artistic, the objects of Negro art which are displayed publicly form part of museum collections of African ethnology and receive no special attention at the hands of ethnologists. The most notable collection is in the Museum of the Congo at Tervueren, Brussels, Belgium. Enormous collections exist also in the museums of ethnology of Berlin and other German cities, in London in the British Museum, in Paris at the Trocadero and in America in Washington, Philadelphia, Cambridge, Chicago, and in New York where the Museum of Natural History contains a vast hall of African ethnology in part derived from the Belgian Congo and presented by H. M. the King of the Belgians. In the majority of these collections their artistic significance is obscured by the wealth of material, and lost, not infrequently, in the efforts made for its elucidation.

The existing publications dealing directly with the subject of Negro art have all proceeded from the little group of amateurs and artists. They occupy a place apart from the scientific literature of African ethnology and travel to which the most important contribution has been made by the Museum of the Congo at Tervueren.

The art of the Negro as displayed in the present and other similar collections is remarkably homogenous and free from evidences of foreign influence. Although the Arabs and Portugese have penetrated the country for several centuries and many objects exist which may be accredited to them the native form of expression has been little modified.

The art of the Negro has no chronology nor can we say whether the objects here exhibited be new or old. While their

patterns seem to date from the beginning of time it may be assumed that for the most part the things themselves are of very recent manufacture. Whatever may be their age it is obvious they are the product of a living art, an exceptional, amazing, living art, with nothing that is mortuary, and all instinct with life, with human life, too, for its elemental forms are almost exclusively anthropomorphic. Wild animals occur and rarely birds and reptiles, but plants never.

Direct confirmation of what is here asserted is to be found in the way in which this art excites the activities of those who come under its influence. First shown among the painters and sculptors of the new school in France, it stirs all who understand it. Direct evidence of this stimulation, not only of the pictorial arts, but of kindred activities are to be found in the new textiles and furniture which grace the present exhibition.

Stewart Culin

The writer desires to express his acknowledgments to the Baron d'Hauleville, the Director, and Dr. Joseph Maes, Curator of Ethnology, of the Museum of the Congo at Tervueren for much valued assistance, as well as to Louis C. C. Clarke, Esq. Curator of the University Museum of Cambridge, England, and to Captain T. A. Joyce of the British Museum, for their unfailing and stimulating interest. His acknowledgments also are due M. Paul Guillaume of Paris and Mr. W. O. Oldman of Brixton, London, for aid in securing many important specimens; to Mr. M. C. D. Crawford, the Design Editor of the Fairchild Publications, for his early and constant encouragement of the writer's efforts, and to Mr. Felix Meyer of Blanck & Co., Inc., who designed and manufactured the Congo cloth employed by Bonwit Teller & Co. in the new costumes which are here displayed.

The cover design of this catalogue is by the artist Mr. H. B. Tschudy, acting Curator of Fine Arts, and the new furniture was made in the Museum by the master cabinet maker, John Bender, attached to the institution.

The following is a list of some recent and easily-procurable publications, not including those on Benin, which treat of Negro art:

H. Clouzot et A Level

L' Art Nègre et l'Art Océanien, Paris, 1919

L' Art du Congo Belge. Art et Décoration, Paris, 1921

Carl Einstein

Afrikanische Plastik, Berlin, n. d.

Negreplastik, Munich, 1920

P. C. Lepage, La Décoration Primitive, Afrique, Paris.

M. de Zayas

African Negro Art. Its influence on Modern Art, New York, 1916

For detailed information concerning the native peoples of the Belgian Congo the inquirer is referred to the superb monographs published by the Museum of the Congo at Tervueren, especially the work on Religion *₁ in which the fetishes in the Congo Museum are illustrated and described, and the work on the Bushongo *₂ by E. Torday and T. A. Joyce from which much of the information here presented is derived.

*₁ Annales du Musée du Congo Belge. Ethnographie et Anthropologie. Serie III
Tome I—Fas. II, 1906

*₂ Ibid, Serie III
Tome II—Fas. I, 1911

SCULPTURE

The art of wood carving is highly esteemed among the Bushongo and sculptors in wood hold a higher place in the Court than the representatives of the other bodies of craftsmen. An intimate relation exists between the textile and carving industries, for not only is the form of many of the carved boxes borrowed from basketry, but the carved wood itself is ornamented with textile patterns.

Wood is the material employed ordinarily by the Negro carver but we find also sculpture in ivory, horn and stone, the human figure being a favorite motive. Objects of carved wood exist in the greatest variety and display their highest artistic perfection in the portrait-statues, the masks and fetish-images and other objects in which the human form is portrayed. Of these the portrait-statues of the Bushongo kings, of which examples exist at Tervueren and in the British Museum, are the finest and most notable. Although their forms have been simplified and conventionalized, unlike the surviving Egyptian statues which are mortuary, they have all the qualities of life. The fetish-images, which are much further conventionalized, are represented with what are considered to be their vital organs, and are animated by the insertion of magic substances in a hole in their navel or the crown of their head. The principal objects of the wood carver's art are the boxes used to contain the oleaginous red paint made of powdered ngula wood which is employed to decorate the skin, and the cups for drinking palm wine. The boxes are of various shapes: rectangular, semi-lunar and in the form of a half-circle and are covered with textile patterns. These patterns are also found on

the drinking cups, some of which are handled mugs, while others are goblets, carved frequently to represent a man's head. Palm wine, obtained from the rafia, is a common beverage of these tribes. Certain privileged persons drink it from buffalo horns carved in high relief. Small mortars for snuff are carved like the paint boxes and carved boxes, with cords for suspension, are used to carry snuff. A notable specimen of the latter in the present collection is in the form of an elderly woman, presumably a portrait, seated in a chair. Tobacco pipes are carved elaborately in human likeness. The human figure is used also as a support for stools and for pillows. The people sit generally on mats, but the chiefs have chairs, copied, evidently, from European, which are carved elaborately and of which interesting examples are exhibited. The ceremonial canes and staves surmounted with human figures are notable. Among personal adornments are wooden combs and hair pins. The musical instruments: Drums, harps, flutes, bells and rattles, afford many examples of the wood-carver's art. Tool and weapon-handles, game boards, food-dishes, canoes and paddles display the same vigorous and original treatment. Ivory carving is confined to trumpets, small fetishes and objects of personal adornment such as combs, hair pins and bracelets, while sculpture in stone appears to be of recent foreign introduction and to copy the technique of the wood carver.

The old ivory carvings are in general more highly conventionalized than those in wood, a notable exception being the figure of a woman, illustrated in this catalogue, which appears to have been executed from life.



MAN WITH SWORD
Carved wood

FETISHES

The Bantu, the race to which the majority of the peoples of the Congo belong, believe generally in the existence of a Supreme Being, the creator of all things, eternal and incapable of doing evil. They think, however, that he is so highly placed and remote that he is not concerned with the affairs of his people. They believe, however, that he is the author of many special, subsidiary beings, a kind of vicars, having great power but not creative. These alone have relations with mortals, and are able to communicate their power both to living beings and to inanimate objects. These intermediary spirits are regarded as malignant, and, interesting themselves in man's affairs, the cause of all his misfortunes. In consequence of this belief the natives propitiate or threaten effigies christened with the names of these spirits.

Such fetishes may be divided into three general classes: First, those which cause sickness and trouble, and belong to an official person as a chief or sorcerer; next, the familiars, the protectors of the house or of the person, and third, those whose activities extend to all of the inhabitants of a village. When a man quits his father's house he goes to a feticheur to procure a fetish of the second kind which he sets up in a corner of his own dwelling. To it he makes offerings of food. It is nearly always interred with its possessor. Fetishes are frequently kept in miniature houses erected for their shelter.

The material of the fetish image may be wood, ivory, horn, stone or clay, but the greater part are of wood, carved from a single block, and display frequently great artistic sentiment. They represent always a man or a woman or a monstrous animal. The

human fetishes represent either white people, to whom special supernatural power are attributed, and who are always represented as clothed, and blacks, who always nude appear. They are painted like the masks with colors that have a ritual significance, the commonest being red, for which ngula, powdered red sandalwood, and white, for which white clay, pembe, is employed.

There is a general tendency to exaggeration and simplification in the human form and a marked tendency to deform the lower limbs. Some of the images are bisexual. Attention is paid to the coiffeur and tatoorage, means of distinguishing the different tribes, and the fetishes most typical of each region are recognizable easily. Some of the images, of which examples occur in the present collection, bristle with old nails and pieces of iron. They are explained by the custom of the natives of the Coast region driving such objects into their images when they make a vow. Some of the images in the present collection appear to be secular but none have been identified so positively. The small new ivory fetishes may have been made for commercial purposes.

FETISH-IMAGES OF WOOD

- 1 Man stuck with iron nails and knives.
- 2 Man stuck with nails and hung with fetishes.
- 3-6 Miniature images stuck with nails.
- 7 Man, standing, with drum.
- 8 Boy with drum.
- 9 Sorcerer (illustrated in catalogue).
- 10 Woman with child in arms, soft wood, painted white.
- 11-12 Women with child in arms.
- 13 Man, standing, painted. Lagos.
- 14-15 Women, standing, with basket on head.



WOOD CARVING

Man with wine receptacle

- 16 Woman with basket on head, bust only.
- 17-19 Images, miniature, with basket on head.
- 20 Woman with cradle on head. Loanda.
- 21 Woman kneeling, holding tobacco pipe; miniature fetishes strung around neck.
- 22 Old woman with bandage at waist.
- 23-24 Boys, painted black.
- 25 Girl, painted black.
- 26 Boy and girl seated, holding basket, painted black.
- 27-28 Seated man and woman, holding baskets, painted black.
- 29 Boy with ox, painted black.
- 29a Man holding mask. Old Calabar.
- 30-31 Man and woman, pair.
- 32-33 Man and woman, pair. French Congo.
- 34-35 Pair of images attached by padlock and chain.
- 36 Pair of images seated side by side on carved block.
- 37 Standing image, bisexual.
- 38 Standing image, bifronton.
- 39 Man, standing. Yoruba
- 40 Man, standing. Ivory Coast.
- 41 Man, standing, holding receptacle for wine (illustrated in catalogue).
- 42 Man, squatting.
- 43 Woman, standing, showing coiffure and tatooage. Ivory Coast.
- 44 Woman, standing. Ivory Coast
- 45 Woman, standing. Baoule, Ivory Coast.

- 46 Woman, standing. Bapindi.
- 47 Woman, standing. Niger (Soudan).
- 48-60 Men, standing.
- 61-79 Women, standing.
- 80-81 Men, standing, painted.
- 82 Man, standing, body bristling with narrow strips of hide.
- 83 Man, standing, with boy on shoulders.
- 84 Man seated on tortoise.
- 85 Bust of man, miniature.
- 86 Woman, standing, with child at back.
- 87 Standing image with three heads, two children?
- 88 Woman, kneeling.
- 89 Woman, squatting.
- 90 Woman, standing, highly conventionalized, with conical head, and cross arms; decorated with bead bracelets of many strands.
- 91 Bust of woman.
- 92 Child in cradle.
- 93 Image, standing, with many pendent rattle-pods and two beaks of Hornbill.
- 94-95 Standing images, mirror at navel.
- 96 Seated image, mirror at navel.
- 97 Image, standing, incased in cloth.
- 98 Image, squatting.
- 99 Images, standing, with drum-shaped bodies.
- 100-102 Standing images, bodies rectangular prisms, perforated.



IVORY IMAGE OF WOMAN

- 103-112 Images of women, terminating in points. Three have fibre skirts.
- 113 Image of woman, similar to preceeding, but cleft at base, with cord for carrying.
- 114 Image of man, foreigner, with high hat and holding mug and bottle.
- 115 Antelope. Baoule, Ivory Coast.
- 116 Cylinder; crown with four divisions at top.

FETISH-IMAGES OF IVORY

- 117-118 Man and woman on carved bases.
- 119 Woman kneeling (illustrated in catalogue).
- 120-121 Man and woman, standing, pair.
- 122-123 Man kneeling, woman standing, pair.
- 124-128 Men standing.
- 129-131 Men kneeling.
- 132-133 Men crouching.
- 134 Woman standing.
- 135-143 Women, standing, miniature. Made of teeth of rhinoceros.
- 144-146 Human busts.
- 147-152 Human heads.
- 153-154 Tips of tusk, with human heads.
- 155-166 Miniature masks.

FETISH-IMAGES OF STONE

- 167 Man smoking pipe, steatite.
- 168 Woman standing, encoiled with serpent, steatite.

- 169 Man, kneeling, steatite.
- 170 Carving in relief, three women, steatite.
- 171 Crucifix, steatite

FETISH-IMAGES OF METAL

- 172 Highly-conventionalized image encased in brass. French Congo.
- 173 Man and woman, mounted, on base, brass. Benin.
- 174 Head holding ring in mouth, body tapering to point, iron.

MASKS

The masks of the peoples of the Congo, like those of Africa in general, may be divided into three principal classes: War masks, dance masks, and the masks of the feticheur, that curious personage who combines the attributes of high priest, magistrate and physician. Whatever may be their use they all are more or less directly connected with the medicine man and are religious rather than festal. They consist almost invariably of a face or head of carved wood, usually painted, and supplemented with an enormous fringe of fibre, attached at the back or base of the mask and hanging over the shoulders. The face, ordinarily, is human, often of small dimension and characterized by an extravagant deformation of the nose. In addition, animal masks such as those of the elephant and the buffalo occur, and sometimes masks with a mixture of animal and human attributes, commonly a human face surmounted with the horns of an antelope.

- 175 Carved mask. French Congo.
Gift of Edward L. Mayer.



HEAD OF STAFF

- 176 Carved and painted mask. French Congo.
- 177 Carved mask, antelope. Ivory Coast.
- 178 Carved and painted mask, gorilla. Ivory Coast.
- 179 Carved mask, round. Ivory Coast.
- 180-181 Carved wooden masks. Liberia.
- 182 Carved and painted mask, elephant.
- 183 Carved mask of aard vark or ant-eater?
- 184 Carved wooden mask, bifronton. Mendi.
- 185 Carved and painted mask, male and female figures at
top. Bapindi.
- 186-192 Carved and painted masks, Galede
- 193-199 Carved and painted masks.
- 200 Carved and painted mask, surrounded by strip of fringed
cloth.
- 201-202 Carved and painted masks. Kasai

DIVINATORY APPARATUS

- 203 Carved and painted wooden bowl sustained by four
human figures, male and female alternating. Yoruba.
Used to hold the palm nuts in the practice of divination
in which these nuts are thrown as dice.
- 204 Carved tray. Yoruba.
Covered with meal and used to record the throws of the
palm nuts in divination.
- 205 Dancing club with figure of Edju, the deity of the div-
ination with palm nuts. Yoruba.

- 206 Set of carved wooden dice with odd die Southern Nigeria.
- 207 Set of carved ivory dice (4) Southern Nigeria
- 208 Set of carved ivory dice (3) Southern Nigeria

CEREMONIAL STAVES AND SCEPTRES

- 209-210 Pairs, with human heads at top (illustrated in catalogue)
- 211-212 Figures of man and woman at tops
- 213-215 Figures of two women at tops.
- 216 Figures of woman seated at top
- 217 Woman standing at top.
- 218 Woman standing at top.
- 219 Woman standing at top, upper part of staff only
- 220 Woman kneeling at top.
- 221 Woman at top, arms outstretched
- 222 Man standing at top.
- 223 Man standing at top.
- 224-227 Human heads at top.
- 228-230 Knobs at top.
- 231-232 Double pointed flat wooden darts.
- 233-234 Batons decorated with seed pods, women at top, back to back.
- 235 Same, without rattle pods.
- 236 Baton with head at top. Angola
- 237 Baton with woman at top, body of staff carved in high relief. Ivory Coast



PLATE XXXV

THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF KARNAK, THEBES, EGYPT.

- 238 Club with grotesque head surrounded by single horn (tooth).
- 238a Staff carved with two figures one above the other.
- 239 Spear or paddle with carved wooden blade.
- 240-242 Carved wooden spear points, miniature.

FURNITURE AND UTENSILS

- 243-245 Models of canoes (pirogues).
- 246 Carved town door. Northern Nigeria (illustrated in catalogue).
- 247 Writing board. Omdurman.
- 248-250 Elaborately carved wooden chairs, with hide seats.
- 251 Carved wooden seat, curved back. Ivory Coast.
- 252 Carved wooden seat, curved, with four corner and one central support.
- 253 Carved wooden stool, round top, supported by two human figures, male and female, back to back.
- 254-255 Carved wooden seats with curved backs studded with brass nails.
- 256-257 Carved wooden stools; hour-glass shaped.
- 258-259 Carved wooden stools, with human supports, vestigial.
- 260 Carved wooden stool, supported by human figure on all fours.
- 261 Carved wooden stool, quadruple supports.
- 262-265 Carved wooden pillows, double supporting stems.
- 266-269 Carved wooden pillows, single supporting stems.
- 270 Carved wooden pillow, double, each with single supporting stem.

- 271 Carved wooden pillow, upheld by standing female figure.
- 272 Carved wooden pillow, upheld by kneeling female figure.
- 273 Carved wooden pillow, upheld by seated figure.
- 274 Carved wooden pillow, upheld by highly conventionalized human figure.
- 275-278 Carved wooden paint boxes with lids.
- 279 Carved wooden box with cover.
- 280-298 Globular carved wooden boxes for snuff with lids and cords for suspension.
- 299 Carved wooden box for snuff, seated figure; portrait statue of elderly woman (illustrated in catalogue).
- 300 Carved wooden box for snuff; standing figure of woman.
- 301 Carved wooden mortar for snuff.
- 302 Rectangular block of carved wood.
- 303 Carved wooden bottle, gourd-shaped.
- 304-321 Carved wooden goblets for palm wine, with human heads.
- 322 Carved wooden goblet for palm wine, with double heads.
- 323-229 Carved wooden handled mugs for palm wine.
- 330-339 Carved wooden goblets for palm wine.
- 340 Carved wooden goblet, with four feet, for palm wine.
- 341 Carved wooden cup, cylindrical, for palm wine.
- 342-343 Carved buffalo horn drinking cups.
- 344-347 Carved wooden cups.
- 348 Carved wooden bowl.
- 349 Carved dish with four feet.



SNUFF BOTTLE

Portrait statue of carved wood

- 350 Handled dish.
- 351 Carved dish, snake head and tail handles.
- 352 Carved dish on high polygonal foot.
- 353 Carved dish, animal support.
- 354 Triple bowl of carved wood on tall feet.
- 355-366 Carved wooden spoons.
- 367-370 Long-handled carved wooden ladles.
- 371 Carved wooden boat-shaped ladle.
- 372-376 Carved ivory spoons.
- 377 Carved horn spoon.
- 378 Carved shell spoon.
- 379-380 Carved wooden knives (copies of foreign).
- 381-382 Carved ivory knives.
- 383-415 Calabashes, engraved with crosses, flowers and geometric designs, used to contain palm wine.
- 416-417 Calabashes, plain.
- 418-421 Covered gourd bowls with decorative patterns.
- 422 Cover for gourd bowl with incised pattern.
- 423-425 Globular receptacles with covers.
- 426-428 Globular receptacles, carved.
- 429-431 Cylindrical wooden boxes covered with bark.
- 431a Brushes of shredded raffia skin.

TOOLS

- 432-433 Ivory pestles.
- 434-435 Ivory crushers.

- 436-442 Ivory picks.
- 443 Iron blades for axe.
- 444 Iron blade.
- 444a Iron tool, toothed, used in preparing fibre?
- 445-447 Adzes, with stone blades.
- 448 Adze handle.
- 449 Hammer, hafted as adze.
- 450 Wedge, wood.
- 451 Handle with hasp.
- 452 Handle with ring.
- 452a Ivory implement used in knitting?

MATS

Men and women have different kinds of mats for sleeping purposes. Those made and used by women are woven of aquatic plants and have damask patterns. Those made and used by men consist of small pieces of reed bound with a net work of cords of different colors which form a special pattern. For wrapping the dead they make special mats from aquatic plants with woven designs in black and white.

- 453 Large mat, geometric patterns.
- 454 Large mat, geometric patterns.
- 455 Large mat, figures of men and antelope.
- 456 Large mat, figures of men.
- 457-462 Large mats, geometric patterns.
- 463-464 Large mats, transverse stripes, red, yellow and black.
- 465-490 Small mats.



MAT WITH ANTELOPE

BASKETRY

The Bushongo are skillful basket makers and their baskets display not only variety in shape but great perfection in workmanship. One kind is very large and is supported by a carved wooden base. Its form is circular, widening at the top. It is provided with a cover and is made of pieces of reed, coiled, and held together by a very tight lacing of raffia. Other baskets, made of plaited rushes, are circular, with their top and bottom square, and are imitated frequently in carved wood. Baskets of many kinds are also made from osier, the forms of which, also, are reproduced in wood. Many of the caps worn by men are made of coiled basketry, as illustrated by specimens in the present collection.

- 491 Covered basket, coiled, expanding to top.
- 492-493 Basket bowls, coiled.
- 494 Coiled ring, pot support?
- 495 Coiled basketry ring, pot support?
- 496-500 Baskets, plaited, round, square at base with square covers.
- 501 The same, without cover.
- 502-503 Baskets, plaited, oblong, rectangular at base and cover.
- 504 Small round basket, square at base and cover.
- 505-508 Baskets, plaited, cup-shaped, square at base.
- 509 Basket, plaited, bottle-shaped, square at base.
- 510 Basket, oblong, with turret-like projections at ends of cover.
- 511 Basket with cover, round, with disks of wood at top and bottom.
- 512-513 Open-work baskets, ovate, hinged in middle.
- 513 a b c Vase-shaped baskets with square bases.
- 514 Basket sieve

TEXTILES

Bark cloth beaten out with mallets of wood was the original clothing of the Bushongo and its use is said to date from the Eighth century. Before that time the people went naked. Afterwards it was worn only at the back. Its use continued down to the period of Shambo the Great. At the present day bark clothes are worn on occasions of ceremony and by women when they are in mourning.

The bark cloth used by women for dresses consist of alternating triangles, rhomboids or rectangles of black and brown color sewn together laboriously with palm fibre. Men wear a single piece ornamented with designs made with the mallet. A robe for a man of high position, in the British Museum, consists of a single very long piece of deep red color ornamented with rosettes and rectangles painted in black.

Ordinary clothing at the present day is made of cloth woven of rafia, in the weaving and embroidering of which the Bushongo excel. The introduction of weaving is attributed to Shambo Bolongongo at the beginning of the Seventeenth century. The material consists of the outer skin from the midrib of the leaf of the rafia palm, grown for the purpose in plantations near villages. Four different types of fabrics may be distinguished: First, ordinary plain cloth; second, cloth ornamented with designs in the process of weaving; third, embroidered cloth, properly so-called and velvet-like fabrics, and fourth, dyed stuffs with patterns in reserve.



BENCH IN CONGO STYLE

Made in Museum

The plain cloth is woven on the simple loom which is here exhibited. Young leaves are gathered and the stripped-off skin of the midrib is cut in thin strands ready for use, the same material being used for both web and warp. The preparatory work is done by boys, but the weaving by men. The fabrics are made soft and flexible afterwards by being soaked in water and pounded in a wooden trough by four or six men or women.

The fabrics with ornamental woven designs are made by skipping threads in the warp. The patterns are symmetrical and receive particular names.

The velvet-like fabrics, which are of especial interest in the present exhibition, are ornamented with patterns in colors. The foundation is plain raffia cloth woven more loosely than ordinarily. The thread employed is rendered soft like silk to the touch by rubbing with the hand, and dyed black, red, or yellow or sometimes bleached, while the body of the cloth is dyed, commonly red. The embroidery thread is passed by means of a needle over one of the threads of the warp and returned, without showing on the opposite side, forming a little loop extending to the height of about one twelfth of an inch. The thread of this loop is cut afterwards with a small knife. The operation is continued until the design, which is executed entirely from memory and without a pattern being drawn on the cloth, is complete.

The red dye is obtained from the wood of the tukula; the black from charcoal; the yellow from the wood of the boa and the white from a mineral substance. The dye is dissolved in water and the fabric, after being dyed, is dried in the sun. It will be observed that each repetition of the design in the rectangular pieces of velvet-like cloth in the present exhibition varies in detail, the whole displaying almost endless variety. In spite, however, of this variation, the patterns themselves are traditional and receive particular names. These velvet-like fabrics are executed entirely by women and the garments made from them are worn by them

on fête days. Occasionally the men have garments with a border of this same material.

The cloth, which, strictly speaking, is embroidered, is often very fine in texture and the embroidery correspondingly delicate. The thread, frequently, is not dyed, but on the other hand both thread and cloth may be dyed red, or colored in such a manner that the patterns appear in white on a black ground. The entire surface of the fabric is covered usually with embroidery and the thread is passed around one thread of the warp or woof like an ordinary embroidery stitch in such a manner as not to show on the wrong side. The work required is incredible.

The stuffs with reserved designs are dyed first red. The desired pattern is then stopped out with pieces of reed which are sewn on the cloth, after which a black dye made with charcoal is applied, leaving the pattern in red on a black ground. The clothes dyed in this way are worn by men.

- 515 Bark cloth.
- 516 Bark cloth, large piece, man's garment.
- 517 Woman's ceremonial robe. Centre bark cloth mosaic; embroidered rafia border.
- 518-519 Looms for rafia.
- 520-570 Rafia cloth, small squares, fringed.
- 571-573 Rafia cloth, small squares with woven pattern in same color, fringed.
- 574-580 Rafia cloth, small squares with transverse stripes in color, fringed.
- 581-586 Rafia cloth garments, long strips composed of small pieces sewn together, plain.
- 587 Rafia cloth garment with two rows of fringe.
- 588 Rafia cloth garment with three rows of fringe.

- 589 Rafia cloth garment with very fine dark stripes.
- 590 Rafia cloth garment with narrow, black stripes.
- 591-592 Rafia cloth garments, dyed yellow with narrow stripes in red and black.
- 593-594 Rafia cloth garments with dark brown and orange stripes.
- 595-597 Rafia cloth garments with horizontal stripes of red, blue and black.
- 598 Rafia cloth garment, long strip, checkered pattern.
- 599 Rafia cloth garments with narrow black and dark brown stripes and orange centre.
- 600-605 Rafia cloth garments, embroidered with wide strip at sides and two narrow bands in middle.
- 606-607 Rafia cloth, blue and white stripes
- 608-651 Embroidered rafia cloth, cut work like velvet, small squares and rectangles.
- 652-664 The same material, narrow strips.

METAL WORK

The Bushongo are skillful metal workers and while their product did not reach the same degree of perfection as that of the smiths of Benin in the 16th and 17th centuries, it may be remembered that the latter were dependent upon Europeans and that their art lost its importance when the relations with Europeans were interrupted. The smith was in high repute among the Bushongo and the children of the royal line were obliged to understand his art. Miele, the 86th chief (1315 A. D.), and Bope Pelenge the 107th chief (about 1780 A. D.), were skillful workers of iron. The carved wooden statue of the latter represents him as seated before a forge. During the reign of the first the art of working iron reached its highest perfection.

In former times iron was smelted in every village, but this is now abandoned, due to the cheapness and superiority of the European metal. Copper was used for the anklets worn by women which were cast in the sand and afterwards worked with the hammer. Brass was known before the arrival of Europeans, and, because of its rarity, occupied the place of gold in civilized countries.

A great variety of iron weapons and tools, remarkable for their diversity of form, were made by the Bushongo. Among the former the knives and swords may be divided into two classes: those used in war and those worn entirely for show. Their forms vary among different tribes. In some the blade is inlaid with concentric circles of brass. Special kinds of knives and swords were used by certain functionaries and for particular purposes.

A series of those employed by the executioner is shown in the present collection. The throwing knife, here represented by a number of examples, was the distinctive weapon of the Bushongo.

All that has been said of iron knives and swords applies equally to spears, harpoons, arrow heads and axes. All of these objects, made of wrought iron, are soft and lack the temper of steel. With them should be mentioned the wrought iron objects used and designated as money, represented by the two broad blades, 6 feet in length, which are placed at the entrance to the hall.

ARMS

- 665-771 Spears with iron blades.
- 772-774 Spears with iron blades and brass spuds.
 - 775 Spear with brass blade.
- 776-777 Spears with copper blades.
 - 778 Spear with brass blade and spud.
 - 779 Spear with copper blade and brass spud.
 - 780 Spear with iron blade and copper-wrapped shaft.
 - 781 Spear with iron head and wooden shaft with burnt patterns.
- 782-783 Spears, brass, blades and shafts in one piece.
 - 783a Spear with double iron blades.
- 784-797 Iron spear heads.
 - 798 Copper spear head.
 - 799 Harpoon with steel blade.
- 800-801 Harpoons with steel blades, brass spuds.
- 802-805 Harpoons with iron points and fore-shafts only.
- 806-806a Harpoons with copper points and foreshafts only.
- 807-816 Executioner's swords. Bangala.
- 817-822 Swords with semi-circular blades at upper ends.
- 823-835 Executioner's swords. Sakara.
- 836-840 Swords, similar to preceeding, but smaller.
- 841-858 Ceremonial swords with iron blades.
 - 859 Ceremonial sword with copper blade.
 - 860 Ceremonial sword with brass blade.

- 861-865 Swords with leather-covered scabbards terminating in disks.
- 866 Leather scabbard for sword like preceeding.
- 867 Sword with wooden scabbard similar to preceeding.
- 868-869 Swords without scabbards like preceeding.
- 870 Sword with ivory haft, gold inlaid blade, and leather scabbard. Arab.
- 871 Dagger with ivory haft.
- 872-874 Curved daggers with ivory hafts.
- 875-877 Curved daggers with wooden hafts.
- 878-889 Knives with hook-shaped blades, wooden hafts.
- 890-892 Knives with hook-shaped blades, ivory handles.
- 893-902 Knives with wooden scabbards.
- 903-907 Knives with leather scabbards.
- 908 Knife with brass scabbard.
- 909 Knife in brass-overlaid scabbard.
- 910 Knife in scabbard wrapped with brass wire.
- 911-943 Knives with iron blades.
- 944 Knife with triangular blade.
- 945-949 Knives with iron blades, single-edged.
- 950-955 Small knives with iron blades.
- 956-957 Knives with copper blades.
- 958 Knife with copper blade, two-edged.
- 959-965 Iron throwing knives.
- 966-974 Axes with iron blades, five-fold divisions at sockets.
- 975-978 Axes with iron blades, three-fold divisions at sockets.
- 979-990 Axes with iron blades of various shapes.
- 991-993 Axes with iron blades inlaid with copper
- 994-1000 Axes with copper blades.

- 1001-1004 Wooden bows, strung.
- 1005-1009 Wooden bows, unstrung.
- 1010-1013 Wooden bows, unstrung, new.
- 1014-1015 Carved supports for bows with three prongs and figures of women.
- 1016 Carved support for bow, like preceeding except one prong missing.
- 1017-1018 Basketry quivers each with 11 iron-pointed arrows.
- 1019 Hide quiver with 10 iron-pointed arrows.
- 1020 Hide quiver with 20 iron-pointed arrows.
- 1021 Hide quiver with 9 iron-pointed arrows.
- 1022-1028 Bridles of arrows with wooden shafts and iron points, 21, 12, 10, 9, 9, 10, and 10 arrows.
- 1029-1034 Bundles of arrows with wooden shafts and iron points, 10 each.
- 1035-1037 Bundles of arrows with wooden shafts and iron points, 12, 9 and 11 arrows.
- 1038-1039 Arrows with harpoon points.
- 1040-1042 Bundles of wooden arrow shafts, iron points missing, 10 each.
- 1043 Wooden arrow with carved point.
- 1044 Arrows with reed shafts and wooden fore-shafts, 5 notched and 6 with iron points.
- 1045 Arrow with reed shaft, three notched prongs.
- 1046 Arrows with reed shafts and iron points.
- 1047 Reed arrow shafts (3)

- 1048 Bow with quiver of poisoned arrows, reed and wood shafts, bark quiver.
- 1049 Quiver of poisoned arrows, wood shafts, bark-quiver.
- 1050 Two pairs of poisoned arrows, points covered and tied together.
- 1051 Poisoned darts, large package wrapped in bark cloth.
- 1052 Wooden shield, round, covered with hide.
- 1053-1054 Wooden shields, rectangular.
- 1055 Wooden arm-shield. East Africa.
- 1056-1071 Basket-shields, oblong.
- 1072-1073 Hide-shields. Zulu.
- 1074-1082 Carved wooden clubs.
- 1083 Flint lock gun.
- 1084 Leather cartridge belt.
- 1085 Powder horn, plain.
- 1086 Powder horn, beaded.
- 1087 Wooden flag-staff holder to be worn with belt.

COSTUME AND PERSONAL ORNAMENT

- 1088 Royal costume of King Behazin of Dahomey (1894).
A similar costume of King Behazin exists in the British Museum. It varies in the head of the ox on the cap being cut from a thin plate of gold.
- 1089 Shoulder cape?, netted raffia twine.
- 1090 Leather garment covered with bead work. Zulu.
- 1091 Belt, embroidered (crocodiles). North Nigeria.
- 1092 Belt of twisted and plaited fibre.
- 1093 Belt of twisted and plaited fibre, with two pendant monkey tails, and string of beads.
- 1094 Tail piece? strands of raffia fibre.
- 1095 Raffia cloth strip, ornamented with bead work in geometric patterns.
- 1096-1097 Head pieces; cloth rolls ornamented with bead-work.
- 1098-1104 Head bands, woven of raffia in ornamental patterns.
- 1105-1109 Raffia basketry caps, crowned with shredded fibre.
- 1110-1125 Raffia basketry caps.
- 1126-1129 Raffia basketry caps, small.
- 1130 Raffia basketry cap, knob-shaped projection at top, two projections in front and two pendant pieces at sides.
- 1131 Raffia basketry cap, like preceeding except has no knob.

- 1132 Rafia basketry cap like preceeding except has one projection in front.
- 1133 Rafia basketry cap; curved piece like end of gourd covered with cloth at top and long fringe of dyed shredded rafia.
- 1134-1137 Netted caps.
- 1138 Quilted cap.
- 1139 Helmet-shaped cap entirely covered with cowrie shells sewn on a foundation of rafia cloth.
- 1140-1141 Pockets, woven of rafia in ornamental patterns, with rosettes of fibre.
- 1142 Bundle of material: Hair and fibre, tightly wound with fine wire.
- 1143 Bundle of material: Fibre.
- 1144-1145 Wooden clogs. Arab.
- 1146 Leather sandals. Arab.
- 1147 Leather slippers. Arab.
- 1148 Fan, circular, rafia basket work.
- 1149 Fly flap.
- 1150-1151 Ivory canes.
- 1152-1154 Ivory and wood canes.
- 1155 Ivory and horn cane.
- 1156 Ivory-headed cane.
- 1157-1158 Ivory-handed whips.
- 1159-1164 Rhinoceros hide whips.
- 1165 Rhinoceros hide scourge.
- 1166 Hide scourge with plaited leather handle.

- 1167 Necklace, fish vertebrae, shells and fetish-image of carved wood.
- 1168 Necklace, carved ivory pendants, teeth and glass beads.
- 1169 Necklace, ivory pendants and glass beads.
- 1170 Necklace, black beads, composition, with glass bead and cowrie shell pendants.
- 1171 Necklace, ivory and glass beads and small ivory images alternating.
- 1172 Necklace, teeth bound lengthwise by intertwined cords of fibre.
- 1173 Necklace, strung seeds.
- 1174-1175 Collars, brass, engraved.
- 1176 Collar, brass, engraved.
- 1177 Collar, heavy brass ring.
- 1178-1179 Collars, copper.
- 1180 Collar, iron.
- 1181-1182 Bracelets, brass.
- 1183-1184 Bracelets, copper.
- 1185 Bracelet, interwrought copper and brass.
- 1186 Bracelet, twisted iron and copper.
- 1187-1188 Bracelets, interwrought iron and copper.
- 1189-1194 Bracelets and anklets, copper.
- 1195-1205 Bracelets, brass.
- 1206 Bracelet, iron.
- 1207 Bracelet, brass and copper rings bound with snake skin, antelope horn pendant.
- 1208 Bracelet, spelter.

- 1209-1212 Bracelets, fibre wrapped with copper wire.
- 1213-1214 Bracelets, fibre wound with iron wire.
- 1215-1241 Bracelets, ivory
 - 1242 Bracelet, wood, inlaid with brass and copper wire.
 - 1243 Bracelet, blue glass.
- 1244-1245 Wristlets, wooden cylinders, strung on brass wire and on cord.
 - 1246 Wristlet, cord with bottle-shaped pendant and rectangular bark bag.
 - 1247 Bracelet, coarse hair strung with claws, teeth, glass beads and small wooden image.
 - 1248 Wristlet, coarse hair strung with tooth.
- 1249-1250 Wristlets, glass and ivory beads and teeth.
 - 1251 Wristlet, teeth and glass beads.
 - 1252 Wristlet? tips of antelope horn strung on cord.
- 1253-1254 Anklets, rawhide with iron bells.
 - 1255 Ankle? strung with three large bilobed wooden beads decorated with copper wire.
 - 1256 Bone (skull) disk with iron hook and iron bells.
 - 1257 Pendant, half of nut and beads.
 - 1258 Pendant, vertebra of fish with cord.
 - 1259 String of monkey teeth.
- 1260-1261 Strings of teeth, various
- 1262-1265 Wooden combs, splints woven with fibre.
- 1266-1274 Wooden combs, carved.
- 1275-1276 Wooden combs, ornamented with beads.
- 1277-1279 Ivory combs.
- 1280-1303 Ivory hairpins.
 - 1304 Hairpin, brass, two prongs.
 - 1305 Leg irons.

POTTERY

The art of pottery making is highly developed among the peoples of the Congo and their wares are characterized by purity and elegance of form and aptitude in decoration. They resemble the neolithic pottery of Europe and are more advanced than the polished and lustered pottery of the neolithic age found in Egypt. In form they bear a marked resemblance to the pottery of our Mississippi valley. Pottery is employed in the Congo for a variety of purposes and its uses are almost entirely practical. In addition to water jars and domestic cooking pots, they make large cauldrons for boiling manioc, jars for palm oil and fermented drinks, containers for paint and food grains, portable furnaces for use in the canoe, tobacco pipes, moulds, crucibles, blast pipes and net sinkers as well as pottery drums, the latter a secondary use of the cooking pot. For the most part pottery making is an industry of women but among a few tribes it is an occupation of men. The processes vary. In one, moulds are used. Again the clay is modelled directly in the hands. Vessels are built up, also, by the familiar process of coiling, like basketry. Leading to the wheel, pots are modelled upon a small, free, board and again upon a board moving on a fixed pivot, with the potter's wheel at the end of these processes which may be regarded as steps in its development. The forms of the pottery are imitated from nature, almost entirely vegetal, the calabash being the most common, and from manufactured objects, especially carved wood and basketry. These latter resemblances are heightened by suggestive decoration in which wood carving, commonly, is simulated. True vitreous glazing is not employed, but vessels are made impervious by the application of gums and resins and decorated with both vegetable and mineral colors.

- 1306-1307 Pottery jars, decorations simulating wood carving.
- 1308 Pottery jar, double, with outer face perforated and with incised decoration.
- 1309 Pottery jar, double-gourd shaped with simulated bands of nails.
- 1310 Pottery cooking pot, decoration simulating wood carving.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- 1311 Basket rattle, with hoop handle.
- 1312-1314 Basket rattles, single.
- 1315-1318 Basket rattles, double.
- 1319 Double-gourd rattel.
- 1320-1326 Wooden bells.
- 1327 Wooden bell with chain and stick handle.
- 1328-1329 Wooden bells, double.
- 1330 Wooden bell, hour-glass shaped.
- 1331-1332 Iron bells, single, on long wooden handles.
- 1333-1335 Iron bells, double, on long wooden handles.
- 1336 Iron bells, triple, on long wooden handle.
- 1337-1339 Iron bells, double.
- 1340 Wooden drum, hollowed log; two square apertures and longitudinal incision at top. Accompanied by two sticks with gum heads.
- 1341 Wooden drum, hollowed log standing upright; elaborately carved in low relief; perforated at foot.
- 1342 Wooden drum, hour-glass shaped; carved, hide head.

- 1343 Wooden drum, cap-shaped, highly polished, with brass nails set around both curved sides.
- 1344 Drum, jar-shaped wooden body with hide head lashed with thongs.
- 1345 Wooden drum with very long tapering body and hide heads, lashed in long cradle with two poles.
- 1346-1347 Wooden drums, long tapering wooden bodies and hide heads lashed together with strings.
- 1348-1349 Wooden drums, similar, but shorter and more tapering at one end.
- 1350-1351 Wooden drums, similar, but smaller.
- 1352 Drum sticks, (2) carved with human heads.
- 1353 Drum sticks, (2) carved, perforated.
- 1354 Drum sticks (2) perforated.
- 1355 Drum stick, with knob of resin.
- 1356-1362 Ivory trumpets, elaborately carved.
- 1363-1366 Ivory trumpets, very large.
- 1367-1384 Ivory trumpets.
- 1385-1388 Antelope horn trumpets.
- 1389 Wooden trumpet, leather-covered.
- 1390-1396 Wooden flutes, 3 holes.
- 1397 Whistle, carved wood.
- 1398 Marimbas, (2) with gourd resonators.
- 1399-1401 Harps, five stringed, with curved necks; ends carved with human heads.
- 1402 Carved neck piece for harp like preceeding.
- 1403-1407 Harp, curved neck with plain ends.

- 1408-1411 Harps with five bows and rectangular prismatic wooden bodies.
- 1412 Lyre with 5 strings
- 1413-1414 Lutes with gourd resonators.
- 1415 Rebec, wooden body inlaid with white metal in minute patterns. Arab.
- 1416-1424 Sanza, with from 9 to 11 metal tongues.
An instrument consisting a hollow wooden resonator, box, with a number of wood or metal tongues which are twanged with the fingers.

GAMES

The game of mancala, played on a board with counters which are dropped into holes arranged in parallel rows, is known practically to all of the African tribes. Mancala, its Arabic name, meaning the game of transferring, is of foreign origin in Africa and, is presumably, of Arab introduction. It may be regarded as indicating the extension of Arab influence in Africa. Among the Bushongo it is known as lela and is said to have been introduced by Shambo the Great. This personage is represented with a lela game board before him in his portrait statue in the British Museum.

A form of the game has been published in America under the name of Chuba by the Milton Bradley Company of Springfield, Massachusetts.

- 1425-1429 Boards for mancala

TOBACCO PIPES

- 1430 Image of woman standing on globe of carved wood from which clay bowl projects at angle.

- 1431 Wood, stem and bowl carved in one piece, the former wrapped with brass.
- 1432 Gourd stem with clay bowl.
- 1433 Curved gourd, lacking bowl.
- 1434 Curved wooden stem terminating in carved head above tapering bowl wrapped with brass.
- 1435 Clay bowl with curved, compound, wooden stem, the fore-part covered with basketry.
- 1436-1437 Carved wood stems and bowls, the latter carved with human faces.
- 1438-1439 Carved wooden bowl and stem.
- 1440 Wooden stems, double, one above the other, with clay bowl.
- 1441 Large clay bowl, carved wood stem.
- 1442-1444 Small clay bowls, carved wooden stems.
- 1445 Clay bowl, reed stem ornamented with burned pattern.
- 1446-1453 Clay bowls, small.
- 1454 Metal, with brass bowl and long stem.

David Aaron & Co., Inc., New York.

Embroidered fabrics inspired by native Congo textiles.

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Sport costumes made of Congo cloth.

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Costume inspired by the Royal costume of the King of Dahomey.

Esmond Mills, Esmond, R. I.

Congo blankets, inspired by Congo textiles.

Katharina Paar and Elizabeth Neumayer, Vienna.

Congo dolls.

Women's Wear, New York.

Original drawing of Congo designs by Christine Chaplin.

Alice Mumford Culin.

Illustrations for Les Contes Intimes du Congo.

The new Congo furniture made in the Museum is upholstered with Blanck & Co.'s Congo cloth.

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